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MY REMINISCENCES

OF

EZRA CORNELL

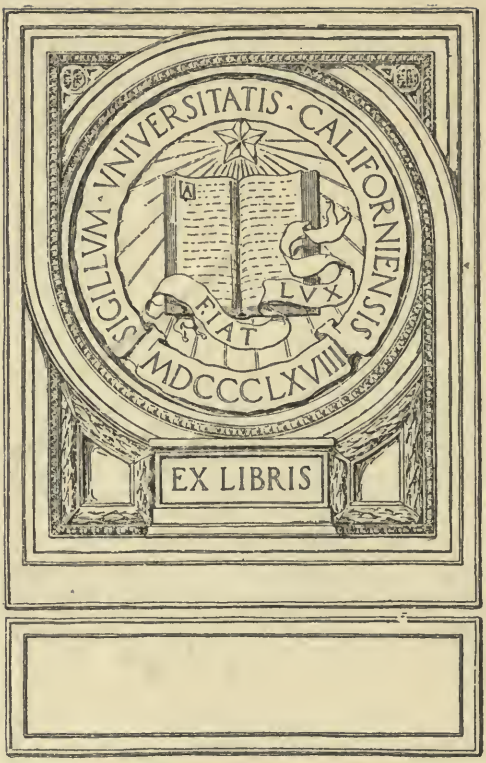
AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY
ON FOUNDER'S DAY, JANUARY 11TH, 1890

BY

ANDREW DICKSON WHITE, LL.D., L.H.D.
FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

... an institution where any person can find instruction in any study.
—EZRA CORNELL

ITHACA, N. Y.
PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY
1890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MY REMINISCENCES OF EZRA CORNELL.

On the first day of the year 1864, on taking my seat for the first time in the State Senate at Albany, I found among my associates a tall, spare man, apparently very reserved and austere, and soon learned his name—Ezra Cornell.

Though his chair was near mine, there was at first little intercourse between us, and there seemed small chance of more. He was steadily occupied, and seemed to care little for making new acquaintances. He was, perhaps, the oldest man in the Senate; I, the youngest: he was a man of business; I was fresh from a University professorship: and, upon the announcement of committees, our paths seemed separated entirely, for he was made chairman of the committee on Agriculture, while to me fell the chairmanship of the committee on Education.

And yet it was this last difference which drew us together; for among the first things referred to my committee was a bill to incorporate a public library which he proposed to found in Ithaca.

On reading this bill I was struck, not merely by its provision for a gift of one hundred thousand dollars to his townsmen, but even more by a certain breadth and largeness in his way of making it. The most striking sign of this was his mode of forming a board of trustees; for, instead of the usual effort to tie up the organization forever in some sect, party, or clique, he had named the best men of his town—his political

opponents as well as his friends; and had added to them the pastors of all the principal churches, Catholic and Protestant.

The breadth of mind revealed by this provision, even more than the munificence of his purpose, drew me to him: we met several times, discussed his bill, and finally I reported it substantially as introduced, and supported it until it became a law.

Our next relations were not, at first, so pleasant. The great Land Grant of 1862, from the general government to the State, for industrial and technical education, had been turned over, at a previous session of the Legislature, to an institution called the "People's College," in Schuyler County; but the Agricultural College, twenty miles distant from it, was seeking to take away from it a portion of this endowment; and among the trustees of this Agricultural College was Mr. Cornell, who introduced a bill to divide the fund between the two institutions.

On this I at once took ground against him, declaring that the fund ought to be kept together at some one institution,—that on no account should it be divided,—that the policy for higher education in the State of New York should be concentration,—and that we had already suffered sufficiently from scattering our resources.

Mr. Cornell's first effort was to have his bill referred, not to my committee, but to his: here I resisted him, and, as a solution of the difficulty, it was finally referred to a joint committee made up of both. On this double-headed committee I deliberately thwarted his purpose throughout the entire session, delaying action and preventing any report upon his bill.

Most men would have been vexed by this; but he took my course with calmness, and even kindness. He never expostulated, and always listened attentively to my arguments against his view: in the meantime I omitted no opportunity to make these arguments as strong as possible, and especially to impress upon him the importance of keeping the fund together.

After the close of the session—during the following summer—as it had become evident that the trustees of the People's College had no intention of raising the additional endowment and providing the equipment required by the Act which gave them the land grant, there was great danger that the whole fund might be lost to the State by the lapsing of the time allowed in the Congressional Act for its acceptance. Just at this period Mr. Cornell invited me to attend a meeting of the State Agricultural Society, of which he was the president, at Rochester; and, when the meeting had assembled, he quietly proposed to remove the difficulty I had raised, by drawing a new bill giving the State Agricultural College half of the fund, and by inserting a clause requiring the College to provide an additional sum of three hundred thousand dollars. This sum he pledged himself to give, and, as the Comptroller of the State had estimated the value of the land grant at six hundred thousand dollars, Mr. Cornell supposed that this would obviate my objection, since the fund of the Agricultural College would thus be made equal to the whole original land-grant fund as estimated, which would be equivalent to keeping the whole fund together.

The entire audience applauded, as well they might: it was a noble proposal. But, much to the disgust of the meeting, I persisted in my refusal to sanction any bill dividing the fund, declaring myself now more opposed to such a division than ever; but saying that if Mr. Cornell and his friends would ask for the *whole* grant—keeping it together, and adding his three hundred thousand dollars, as proposed—I would support such a bill with all my might.

I was led to make this proposal by a course of circumstances which might, perhaps, be called "Providential." For some years, ever since passing a year of my college life in a little sectarian college in the western part of the State, I had been dreaming of a University, had looked into the questions involved, at home and abroad, had approached sundry wealthy

and influential men on the subject, but had obtained no encouragement, until this strange and unexpected combination of circumstances—a great land grant, the use of which was to be determined largely by the committee of which I was chairman, and this noble pledge of Mr. Cornell.

Yet for some months nothing seemed to come of our conference. At the assembling of the Legislature in the following year, it was more evident than ever that the trustees of the People's College intended to do nothing: during the previous session they had promised through their agents to supply the endowment required by their charter; but, though this charter obliged them, as a condition of taking the grant, to have an estate of two hundred acres, buildings for the accommodation of two hundred students, and a faculty of not less than six professors, with a sufficient library and other apparatus, yet, when our committee again took up the subject, we found that hardly the faintest pretense of complying with these conditions had been made. Moreover, their charter required that their property should be free from all encumbrance; and yet the so-called donor of it, Mr. Charles Cook, could not be induced to cancel a small mortgage which he held upon it. Still worse, before the Legislature had been in session many days, it was found that his agent had introduced a bill to relieve the People's College of all conditions, and to give it, without any pledge whatever, the whole land grant, amounting to very nearly a million of acres.

But even worse than this was another difficulty. In addition to the strong lobby sent by Mr. Cook to Albany in behalf of the People's College, there came representatives of nearly all the smaller denominational colleges in the State,—men eminent and influential, but clamoring for a division of the fund among their various institutions, though the fragment which would have fallen to each would not have sufficed even to endow a single professorship.

While all was thus uncertain, and the fund seemed likely

to be utterly frittered away, I was, one day, going down from the State Capitol, when Mr. Cornell joined me and entered into conversation. He was, as usual, austere and reserved in appearance, but I had already found that below this appearance there was a warm heart and noble purpose : no observant associate could fail to notice that the only measures in the Legislature which he cared for were those proposing some substantial good to the State or Nation, and that political wrangling and partisan jugglery he despised.

On this occasion, after some little general talk, he quietly said, "I have about half a million dollars more than my family will need : what is the best thing I can do with it for the State?" I answered, "Mr. Cornell, the two things most worthy of aid in any country are charity and education ; but, in our country, the charities appeal to everybody ; any one can understand the importance of them, and the worthy poor or unfortunate are sure to be taken care of: as to education, the lower grade will always be cared for in the public schools by the State ; but the institutions of the highest grade, without which the lower can never be thoroughly good, can be appreciated by only a few : the policy of our State is to leave this part of the system to individuals : it seems to me, then, that if you have half a million to give, the best thing you can do with it is to establish or strengthen some institution for higher instruction." I then went on to show him the need of a larger institution for such instruction than the State then had ;—that such a college or university worthy of the State would require far more in the way of faculty and equipment than most men supposed ;—that the time had come when scientific and technical education must be provided for in such an institution ;—and that literary education should be made the flower and bloom of the system thus embodied.

He listened attentively, but said little : the matter seemed to end there ; but not long afterward he came to me and said, "I agree with you that the land-grant fund ought to be kept

together, and that there should be a new institution fitted to the present needs of the State and the country : I am ready to pledge to such an institution five hundred thousand dollars as an addition to the land-grant endowment, instead of three hundred thousand as I proposed at Rochester."

As may well be imagined, I hailed this proposal joyfully, and the sketch of a bill embodying his purpose was soon made. But here I wish to say, that, while Mr. Cornell urged Ithaca as the site of the proposed institution, he never showed any wish to give his own name to it : the suggestion to that effect was mine : he, at first, doubted the policy of it ; but, on my insisting that it was in accordance with time-honored American usage, as shown by the names of Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Amherst, Bowdoin, Brown, Williams, and the like, he yielded.

We now held frequent conferences as to the leading features of the institution to be created ; in these I was more and more impressed by his sagacity and largeness of view, and, when our sketch of the bill was fully developed, it was put into shape by Charles J. Folger, of Geneva, then chairman of the Judiciary committee of the Senate, afterwards Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, and finally Secretary of the Treasury of the United States. The provision forbidding any sectarian or partisan predominance in the Board of Trustees or Faculty was proposed by me, heartily acquiesced in by Mr. Cornell, and put into shape by Judge Folger. The State-scholarship feature and the system of alumni representation on the Board of Trustees were also accepted by Mr. Cornell at my suggestion.

I refer to these things especially because they show one striking characteristic of the man, namely, his willingness to give the largest measure of confidence when he gave any confidence at all, and his readiness to be advised largely by others in matters which he felt to be outside his own province.

On the other hand, the whole provision for the endow-

ment, the part relating to the land-grant, and, above all, the supplementary bill allowing him to make a contract with the State for "locating" the lands, were thought out entirely by himself; and in all these matters he showed, not only a public spirit far beyond that displayed by any other benefactor of education in his time, but a foresight which seemed to me then, and seems to me now, almost miraculous.

But, while he thus left the general educational features largely to me, he uttered, during one of our conversations, words which showed that he comprehended the true theory of a university: these words are now engraved upon the Cornell University seal: "I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study."

The introduction of this new bill into the Legislature was a signal for war. Almost all the denominational colleges girded themselves for the fray, and sent their agents to fight us at Albany; they also stirred up the secular press, without distinction of party, in the regions where they were situated, and the religious organs of their various sects in the great cities.

At the center of the movement against us was the "People's College": it had rallied in force and won over the chairman of the Education committee in the Assembly, so that under various pretexts he delayed considering the bill. Worst of all there appeared against us, late in the session, a professor from the Genesee College—a man of high character and great ability; and he did his work most vigorously. He brought the whole force of the church with which he was connected to bear upon the Legislature, and insisted that every other college in the State had received something from the public funds, while his had received none.

As a first result, a proposal came from some of his associates, that twenty-five thousand dollars of the land-grant fund should be paid to Genesee College; this the friends of the Cornell bill resisted, on the ground that, if the fund were broken into in one case, it would be in others.

It was next proposed that Mr. Cornell should agree to give twenty-five thousand dollars to Genesee College on the passage of the bill; this Mr. Cornell utterly refused, saying that not for the passage of any bill would he make any private offer or have any private understanding,—that every condition must be put into the bill, where all men could see it, and that he would then accept or reject it as he might think best. The result was that our opponents were strong enough to force a clause into the bill requiring him to give twenty-five thousand dollars to Genesee College, before he could be allowed to give five hundred thousand dollars to the proposed University; and the friends of the bill, not feeling strong enough to resist this clause, and not being willing to see the enterprise wrecked for the want of it, allowed it to go unopposed. The whole matter was vexatious to the last degree: a man of less firmness and earnestness, thus treated, would have thrown up his munificent purpose with disgust, but Mr. Cornell quietly persevered.

Yet the troubles of the proposed University had only begun. Mr. Charles Cook, who had, while a State Senator during the previous session of the Legislature, secured the United States land grant of 1862 for the People's College, was a man of great force, a born leader of men, anxious to build up his part of the State, and especially the town from which he came, though he had no special desire to put any considerable part of his own wealth into a public institution. He had seen the opportunities afforded by the land grant, had secured it, and was now determined to fight for it. The struggle became bitter. His emissaries, including the members of the Senate and Assembly from his part of the State, made common cause with the sectarian colleges, and with various corporations and persons who, having bills of their own in the Legislature, were ready to exchange services and votes.

The coalition of all these forces against the Cornell University bill soon became very formidable, and the committee

on Education in the Assembly, to which the bill had been referred, seemed more and more controlled by them. To meet this difficulty, we resorted to means intended to enlighten the great body of the Senators and Assemblymen as to the purposes of the bill. To this end Mr. Cornell invited the members by squads, sometimes to his rooms at Congress Hall, sometimes to mine at the Delavan House: there he laid before them his general proposal and the financial side of the plan, while I dwelt upon the need of a University in the true sense of the word;—upon the opportunity offered by this great fund;—upon the necessity of keeping it together;—upon the need of large means to carry out any scheme of technical and general education, such as was contemplated by the Congressional Act of 1862;—showed the proofs that the People's College would and could do nothing to meet this want;—that division of the fund among the existing colleges was simply the annihilation of it;—and, in general, did my best to enlighten the reason and arouse the patriotism of the members on the subject of a worthy University in our State.

In this way we made several strong friends in both Houses: among them some men of great natural force of character who had never enjoyed the privilege of much early education, but who were none the less anxious that those who came after them should have the best opportunities. Of these I may name especially Senators Cook, of Saratoga, and Ames, of Oswego. Men of high education and culture also aided us, especially Judge Folger, Mr. Andrews, and Mr. Havens in the Senate, with Mr. Lord and Mr. Weaver in the Assembly.

While we were thus laboring with the Legislature as a whole, serious work had to be done with the Assembly committee, and Mr. Cornell employed a very eminent lawyer to present his case, while Mr. Cook employed one no less noted to take the opposite side. The session of the committee was held in the Assembly chamber, and there was a large attendance of spectators; but, unfortunately, the lawyer employed

by Mr. Cornell having taken little pains with the case, his speech was cold, labored, perfunctory, and fell flat. The speech on the other side was much more effective: it was thin and demagogical in the extreme, but the speaker knew well the best tricks for catching the "average man"; he indulged in eloquent tirades against the Cornell bill as a "monopoly,"—"a wild project,"—"a selfish scheme,"—"a job,"—"a grab"—and the like; denounced Mr. Cornell roundly as "seeking to erect a monument to himself"; hinted that he was "planning to rob the State"; and, before he had finished, had pictured Mr. Cornell as a swindler and the rest of us as dupes or knaves.

I can never forget the quiet dignity with which Mr. Cornell sat and took this abuse. Mrs. Cornell sat at his right, I at his left: in one of the worst tirades against him, he turned to me and said quietly, and without the slightest anger or excitement, "If I could think of any other way in which half a million of dollars would do as much good to the State, I would give the Legislature no more trouble." Shortly afterward, when the invective was again especially bitter, he turned to me and said, "I am not sure but that it would be a good thing for me to give the half a million to old Harvard College in Massachusetts, to educate the descendants of the men who hanged my forefathers."

There was more than his usual quaint humor in this,—there was that deep reverence which he always bore toward his Quaker ancestry, and which seemed to have become part of him. I admired Mr. Cornell on many occasions, but never more than during that hour when he sat, without the slightest anger, mildly taking the abuse of that prostituted pettifogger, the indifference of the committee, and the laughter of the audience. It was a scene for a painter, and I trust that some day it will be fitly perpetuated for the University.

This struggle over, the committee could not be induced to report the bill: it was easy, after such a speech, for its

members to pose as protectors of the State against a swindler and a monopoly ; the chairman, who, shortly after the close of the session, was mysteriously given a position in the New York Custom House, made pretext after pretext without reporting, until it became evident that we must have a struggle in the Assembly and drag the bill out of the committee in spite of him. To do this required a two-thirds vote : all our friends were set at work, and some pains taken to scare the corporations which had allied themselves with the enemy, in regard to the fate of their own bills, by making them understand that, unless they stopped their interested opposition to the University bill in the House, a feeling would be created in the Senate very unfortunate for them. In this way their clutch upon sundry members of the Assembly was somewhat relaxed, and these were allowed to vote according to their consciences.

The Cornell bill was advocated most earnestly in the House by Mr. Henry B. Lord : in his unpretentious way he marshalled the University forces, moved that the bill be taken from the committee and referred to the committee of the whole. Now came a struggle. Most of the best men in the Assembly stood nobly by us ; but the waverers—men who feared local pressure, sectarian hostility, or the opposition of Mr. Cook to measures of their own—attempted, if not to oppose the Cornell bill, at least to evade a vote upon it. In order to give them a little tone and strength, Mr. Cornell went with me to various leading editors in the city of New York, and we explained the whole matter to them, securing editorial articles favorable to the University : prominent among these gentlemen were Horace Greeley of the Tribune, Erastus Brooks of the Express, and Manton Marble of the World. This undoubtedly did much for us, yet when the vote was taken the old loss of courage was again shown ; but several friends of the bill stood in the cloak-room, fairly shamed the waverers back into their places, and, as a result, to the surprise

and disgust of the chairman of the Assembly committee, the bill was taken out of his control, and referred to the committee of the whole House.

Another long struggle now ensued, but the bill was finally passed and came back to the Senate. There the struggle was renewed, all kinds of delaying tactics were resorted to, but the bill was finally carried, and received the signature of Governor Fenton.

Now came a new danger. During their struggle against the bill, our enemies had been strong enough to force into it a clause enabling the People's College to retain the land fund, provided it should be shown within six months of the passage of the bill to be in possession of a sum such as the Board of Regents should declare would enable it to comply with the conditions on which it had originally received the grant. The Board of Regents now reported that the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars would be equivalent to such a compliance, and would ensure the fund to the People's College. Naturally we watched, in much uneasy suspense, during those six months, to see whether Mr. Cook and the People's College authorities would raise this sum of money, so small in comparison with that which Mr. Cornell was willing to give, in order to secure the grant. But our fears were baseless, and on the 5th day of September, 1865, the Trustees of Cornell University were assembled for the first time at Ithaca.

Then came to them a revelation of a quality in Mr. Cornell unknown to most of them before. In one of the petitions forwarded from Ithaca to the Legislature by his fellow-citizens it had been stated that "he never did less than he promised, but generally more." So it was found in this case: for he turned over to the Trustees, not only the securities for the five hundred thousand dollars required by the charter, but also gave two hundred acres of land as a site. So came into full being Cornell University.

Yet the services of Mr. Cornell had only begun: he at

once submitted to us a plan for doing what no other citizen had done for any other State. In the other Commonwealths which had received the land grant, the authorities had taken the scrip representing the land, sold it at the market price, and, as the market was thus glutted, had realized but a small sum ; but Mr. Cornell, with that foresight which was his most wonderful characteristic, saw clearly what could be done by using the scrip to take up the land for the institution. To do this he sought aid in various ways, but no one dared join him, and at last he determined to bear the whole burden himself. Scrip representing over seven hundred thousand acres still remained in the hands of the Comptroller. The Trustees received Mr. Cornell's plan for dealing with the scrip somewhat doubtfully, but the enabling Act was passed, by which he was permitted to "locate" this land for the benefit of the University. So earnest was he in this matter that he was anxious to take up the entire amount, but here his near friends interposed : we saw too well what a terrible load the taxes and other expenses on such a vast tract of land would become, before it could be sold to advantage. Finally Mr. Cornell yielded somewhat : it was agreed that he should take up five hundred thousand acres, and he now gave himself day and night to this great part of the enterprise, which was to provide a proper financial basis for a University such as we hoped to found.

Meanwhile, at Mr. Cornell's suggestion, I devoted myself to a more careful plan of the new institution, and, at the next meeting of the Board, in a "Plan of Organization," sketched out the purpose and constitution of such a University as that proposed. Mr. Cornell studied it carefully, gave it his approval, and a copy with notes in his own hand is still preserved.

I had supposed that this was to end my relations with Mr. Cornell, so far as the University was concerned. A multitude of matters seemed to forbid my taking any further care for it, and

a call to another position very attractive to me drew me away from all thoughts of connection with it, save, perhaps, such as was involved in meeting the Trustees once or twice a year.

Mr. Cornell had asked me, from time to time, whether I could suggest any person for the Presidency of the University; I mentioned various persons, and presented the arguments in their favor: one day he said to me quietly, that he also had a candidate; I asked him who it was, and he said that he preferred to keep the matter to himself until the next meeting of the Trustees. Nothing more passed between us on that subject: I had no inkling of his purpose, but thought it most likely that his candidate was a western gentleman whose claims had been strongly pressed upon him. When the Trustees came together, and the subject was brought up, I presented the merits of various gentlemen, especially of one already at the head of an important College in the State, who, I thought, would give us success. Upon this, Mr. Cornell rose, and, in a very simple but earnest speech, presented my name. It was entirely unexpected by me, and I endeavored to show the Trustees that it was impossible for me to take the place in view of other duties;—that it needed a man of more robust health, of greater age, and of wider reputation in the State. But Mr. Cornell quietly persisted, our colleagues declared themselves unanimously of his opinion, and, with many misgivings, I gave a provisional acceptance.

The relation thus begun ended only with Mr. Cornell's life, and from first to last it grew more and more interesting to me. We were thrown much together at Albany, at Ithaca, and on various journeys undertaken for the University; and, the more I saw of him, the deeper became my respect for him. There were, indeed, toward the end of his life, some things trying to one of my temperament, and among these things I may mention his exceeding reticence, and his willingness not only to labor but to wait; but these stood not at all in the way of my respect and affection for him.

His liberality was unstinted. While using his fortune in taking up the lands, he was constantly doing generous things for the University and those connected with it. One of the first of these was his gift of the library in classical literature collected by Dr. Charles Anthon of Columbia College: nothing could apparently be more outside his sympathy than the studies represented by these seven thousand volumes; but he stood firm to his idea of the new institution, bought them for over twelve thousand dollars, and gave them to the University.

Then came the Jewett Collection in Geology, which he gave at a cost of ten thousand dollars; the Ward Collection of casts, at a cost of three thousand; the Newcomb Collection in Conchology, at a cost of sixteen thousand; an addition to the University grounds, valued at many thousands more; and it was only the claims of a multitude of minor University matters upon his purse which prevented his carrying out a favorite plan of giving us a great telescope, at a cost of fifty thousand dollars. At a later period, to extinguish the University debt, to increase the equipment, and eventually to provide free scholarships and fellowships, he made an additional gift of about seventy thousand dollars.

While doing these things, he was constantly advancing large sums in locating the University lands, and in paying University salaries, for which our funds were not yet available, while from time to time he made many gifts which, though smaller, were no less striking evidences of the largeness of his view: I may mention a few among these as typical.

Having found a set of Piranesi's great work on the Antiquities of Rome,—a superb copy—the gift of a Pope to a Royal Duke,—upon the catalogue of a London bookseller, I showed it to him, when he at once ordered it for our library at a cost of about one thousand dollars. At another time, seeing the need of some costly works to illustrate Agriculture, he gave them to us at a cost of over a thousand dollars; and, having heard Professor Tyndall's lectures in New York, he

bought additional physical apparatus to enable our resident professor to repeat the lectures at Ithaca, and this cost him fifteen hundred dollars.

Characteristic of him, too, was another piece of munificence. When the clause forced into the University charter, requiring him to give twenty-five thousand dollars to another institution before he could be allowed to give half a million to his own, was noised abroad through the State, there was a general feeling of disgust, and at the next session of the Legislature a bill was brought in to refund the twenty-five thousand dollars to him. Upon this, he remarked that what he once gave he never took back, but that if the University Trustees would accept it he had no objection. The bill was modified to this effect, and thus the wrong was righted.

Early in the year 1868 I went to Europe for three months, to look at various institutions for technical education, and under instructions to make large purchases of books, and, if possible, to secure one or two men greatly needed in special departments not then much cultivated in this country. It was a cold, raw morning in March when Mr. Cornell went with me to the dock, and gave his last kind assurances. He had felt strongly the importance of having the Agricultural department fairly equipped, and he had been told of an eminent Professor of Veterinary Surgery in England who might possibly be secured : the last words that I heard from the shore were from Mr. Cornell, who called out to me in a jocose way, "Bring back that horse-doctor!" His foresight was justified, for the gentleman thus secured has since rendered inestimable service, not only in professorial work, but in shielding the whole country from cattle-plague.

His generosity was unfailing. Large as were the purchases which I was authorized to make, the number of desirable things outside this limit steadily grew larger ; but my letters to him invariably brought back the commission to secure this additional material.

During this occupation of mine in Europe, he was quite as busy in the woods of the upper Mississippi and on the plains of Kansas, taking up University lands. No fatigue or expenditure deterred him.

On meeting again at Ithaca, we found that, during our work elsewhere, many matters had fallen into a very backward state; indeed, the look of everything at the University was very discouraging. Though our charter required us to begin instruction in October, there seemed in August little chance of it. The contractor for the first building had failed, and his work was wretchedly behindhand; the main roads to the University site were as yet impassable, for the two deep ravines which intersect them were as yet unbridged; the grounds were encumbered with heaps of earth and piles of material; furniture, apparatus, books, which had come in great quantities, had been bestowed wherever any temporary place could be found. Typical was the case of the Holtz electrical machine which I had sent from Germany: it was in those days a great novelty, and many were anxious to see it; but for weeks it could not be found, and it was discovered only when the last pots and pans were pulled out of the kitchen store-room in the great student barrack known as "Cascadilla." Things of every sort of which there was pressing need had been delayed in steamships and railways, or were stuck fast in custom-houses and warehouses, from Berlin and Paris to Ithaca. Our friends in Ithaca, during our absence, had toiled heroically; but the resources of the town, then much less energetic than now, had been insufficient for so much work in so short a time. The heating apparatus, and even the doors for the rooms at the Cascadilla building—the main refuge for the great body of our students—were not in place until many days after winter weather had set in.

To complicate matters, students began to come in numbers far greater, and at a period much earlier, than we had expected. But, if our expectations had been too small, theirs were

quite as much too large: in the warmth of his sympathy for young men of great talents and small means, Mr. Cornell had expressed himself very strongly as to the ability of such to support themselves by manual labor, while carrying on their studies. He had judged the possibilities in their case by what he had himself accomplished; hence arose a very trying addition to our cares. Before our doors opened, over four hundred students were pressing forward; many were of the best sort possible, and some were men who have risen since to positions of great honor and responsibility; but with these came probably the most motley company that ever sought entrance at an institution of learning. Most of these had interpreted the philanthropic views of Mr. Cornell in the light of their own hopes: as a result of this, in the thickest of our difficulties, we were beset by a multitude of eager young men insisting on receiving self-supporting labor. Nearly all of these who had any trade or could offer skilled labor of any sort proved useful to us, and some graduates of whom Cornell University is now most proud supported themselves in those days by working as carpenters, or masons, or printers, or accountants, or shorthand writers. But beside these were many who had never done any skilled labor, and even a larger number who had never done any manual labor at all: these were employed, as far as possible, in grading roads, laying out paths, helping on the farm, doing janitors' work, and the like. Some of these were successful, most were not: it was found that, as to many of them, it would be cheaper to support them at a hotel, and to employ day-laborers in their places: much of their work had to be done over, at a cost greater than the original outlay should have been. Typical was the matter of husking corn by student labor upon the University farm: it was found to cost more than the resulting shelled corn could be sold for in market.

But the expectations of the youths were none the less highly developed. One of them, who had never done any sort of

manual labor, asked if, while learning to build machinery, and supporting himself and his family, he could not lay up something against contingencies ; another, a teamster in a western State, came to offer his services, and, on being asked what he wished to study, said that he wished to learn to read. On being told that the public school was the place for that, he was very indignant, and quoted Mr. Cornell's words, "I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study." Others, good scholars but of delicate build, having applied for self-supporting employment, were assigned to light occupations upon the University grounds, but, becoming weary of it, wrote bitterly to leading metropolitan journals, denouncing Mr. Cornell's bad faith and cruelty : one came all the way from Russia, though only able to reach Ithaca from New York by charity, and, on arriving, was found to be utterly incapable either of physical or mental effort.

Added to these were dreamers and schemers of more mature age. The mails were burdened with their communications, and our offices with their presence. Some had plans for the regeneration of humanity by inventing machines which they wished us to build ; some by devising systems of thought which they wished us to promulgate ; some by writing books which they wished us to publish ; most by taking professorships which they wished us to endow.

The inevitable "politician" also appeared; and, at the first meeting of the Trustees in Ithaca, two of the most notorious party hacks in New York city came by express train to tell us "what the people expect," and to nominate sundry friends of their own to various positions in our gift : I think that the hardest strain ever brought upon Mr. Cornell and myself was in showing civility to all these gentlemen ; yet, as we were obliged to deny them, no suavity on our part could stay the inevitable result—their hostility.

The attacks of the denominational Press upon us for our unsectarian, and therefore, as they claimed, "godless" charac-

ter, the attacks of many local presses in the interest of institutions which had failed to secure a part of the fund, were thus largely reinforced. Ever and anon came onslaughts upon us personally, and upon every feature of the institution, whether adopted, probable, possible, or conceivable. One eminent editorial personage, having vainly sought to "unload" a member of his editorial staff into one of our professorships, immediately published a long communication showing the turpitude of Mr. Cornell in land matters,—fairly howling for legislative investigation ; and never afterward, until a very disgraceful affair put an end to his public career, did he omit an opportunity to make a fling at the new institution.

Another gentleman, editor of a "Review," hurried to Ithaca, and insisted that the one thing needful for the University was a full-page advertisement and a laudatory article in his columns: when informed that the demands upon our funds made it impossible to appropriate the large sum he required, he hinted significantly that we might fare as another college had done, and receive *gratis* an elaborate article demonstrating the futility of all our plans ; but he was referred to Horace Greeley of the New York Tribune, and to Erastus Brooks of the New York Express, both upon our Board of Trustees, and we saw him no more. But with others we were not so fortunate, and attacks of every sort, with appeals to the Legislature against us, were multiplied.

During this period I passed much time with Mr. Cornell on his home farm. He lived generously, in a kind of patriarchal simplicity, and I remember with intense interest many of our conversations. His reticence gradually yielded, and he gave me much information regarding his earlier years : they had been full of toil and struggle, but there was clear evidence through the whole of a noble purpose. Whatever of worthy work his hand had found to do, he had done it with his might : the steamers of Cayuga Lake, the tunnel which carries the waters of Fall Creek to the mills below, the mills themselves,

the dams against that turbulent stream, which he built after others had failed and which stand firmly to this day, the calendar clocks for which the town has become famous, and of which he furnished the original hint ; all these he touched upon, though so modestly that I never found out his full agency in them until I had made the acquaintance of many of his townsmen at a later period.

Especially interesting were his references to the beginnings of American telegraphic enterprise, with which he had so much to do.

His connection with it began in a curious way. Traveling in northern New England to dispose of a plow which he had invented, he entered the office of a gentleman who had taken the contract for laying the first telegraphic wires underground between Washington and Baltimore, and found him in much doubt and trouble : the difficulty was to lay the leaden pipe containing the two insulated wires at a cost within the terms of the contract. Hearing this, Mr. Cornell said : "I will build you a machine which will dig the trench, lay the pipe and wires, and cover them with earth rapidly and cheaply."

This proposal was at first derided ; but, as Mr. Cornell insisted upon it, he was at last allowed to show what he could do. The machine having been constructed, Mr. Cornell met a committee to show it. The long line of horses attached to it having been started, it was thrown about over the inequalities of the ground so much that the committee declared that it could not succeed. Presently Mr. Cornell took them to the ground over which the machine had just passed, and, pointing them to a line of newly turned earth, asked them to dig in it : having done this, they found the pipe encasing the wires, acknowledged his triumph, and immediately employed him to lay the wires by his machine.

But before long he became convinced that this was not the best way. Having drawn all the books on electricity that he

could find in the Congressional Library, he had satisfied himself that it would be far better and cheaper to string the wires through the open air upon poles. This idea was for a time resisted by the men controlling the scheme. Some of them regarded such interference in a scientific matter by one whom they considered a plain working man as altogether too presuming. But one day Professor Morse came out to decide the matter. Finding Mr. Cornell at his machine, the Professor explained the difficulties in the case—especially the danger of shaking the confidence of Congress, and so losing the necessary appropriation, should any change in plan be adopted—and then asked Mr. Cornell if he could see any way out of the difficulty. Mr. Cornell answered that he could : whereupon Professor Morse expressed a strong wish that it might be taken. At this Mr. Cornell gave the word to his men, started up the long line of horses dragging the ponderous machine, guided it with his own hands into a great bowlder lying near, and thus broke and deranged the whole machinery.

As a natural result it was announced by various journals at the national capital that the machinery for laying the wires had been broken by the carelessness of an employé, but that it would doubtless soon be repaired and the work resumed. Thanks to this stratagem, the necessary time was gained without shaking the confidence of Congress, and he at once began stringing the wires upon poles; the insulation was found far better than in the underground system, and there was no more trouble.

The confidence of the promoters of the enterprise being thus gained, Mr. Cornell was employed to do their work in all parts of the country, and his sturdy honesty, energy, and persistence justified their confidence and laid the foundations of his own fortune.

Very striking were the accounts of his troubles and trials during the prosecution of this telegraphic work ; troubles from men of pretended science,—from selfish men,—from stupid

men,—all told without the slightest feeling of bitterness against any human being, but with a quaint good-nature and shrewd humor which made the story very enjoyable.

Through all his history, as I then began to learn it, ran a thread, or rather a strong cord, of stoicism. He had clung with such desperate tenacity to his faith in the future of the telegraphic system, that, sooner than part with his interest in it, even when its stock was utterly discredited, he suffered the disadvantages of poverty, and almost the pangs of want. While pressing on his telegraphic construction, he had been terribly wounded in a western railroad accident, but had quietly extricated himself from the dead and dying, and, as I learned from others, had borne his sufferings without a murmur. At another time, overtaken by the ship-fever at Montreal, and thought to be beyond help, he had quietly made up his mind that, if he could reach a certain hydropathic establishment in New York, he could recover; and he had dragged himself through that long journey, desperately ill as he was, in railway cars, steamers, and stages, until he reached his desired haven; and there he finally recovered, though nearly every other person attacked by the disease at his Montreal hotel had died.

Pursuing his telegraphic enterprise, he had been obliged at times to fight very strong men and great combinations of capital, but this same stoical spirit carried him through: he used to say laughingly that his way was to "tire them out."

When, at last, fortune had begun to smile upon him, his public spirit began to show itself in more striking forms, though not in forms more real, than in his earlier days. Evidences of this met the eye of his visitors at once, and among these were the fine cattle, sheep, fruit-trees, and the like, which he had brought back from his visit to the great Exposition of the World's Industry in 1851 at London. His observations of the agricultural experiments of Lawes and Gilbert at Rothampstead in England, and his visits to various Agricultur-

al Exhibitions, had led him to attempt similar work at home. Everything that could improve the community in which he lived had been matter of concern to him. He had taken the lead in establishing "Cascadilla Place," in order to give a very gifted woman an opportunity to show her abilities in administering hydropathic treatment to disease. He had gone on with his public library, which, when I first visited Ithaca, was just completed.

He never showed the slightest approach to display or vanity regarding any of these things, and most of them I heard of first, at a later period, from others.

Although his religious ideas were very far from those generally considered orthodox, he had a deep sympathy with every good effort for religion and morality, no matter by whom made; and he contributed freely to churches of every name and to good purposes of every sort. He had quaint ways at times in making such gifts, and from the many stories showing these I select one as characteristic. During the war, the young ladies of the village held large sewing-circles, doing work for the soldiers. When Mr. Cornell was asked to contribute to their funds, to the great surprise of those who asked him, he declined, and said dryly, "Of course these women don't really come together to sew for the soldiers; they come together to gossip." This was said, no doubt with that peculiar twinkle of the eye which his old friends can well remember; but, on the young ladies' protesting that he did them injustice, he answered, "If you can prove that I am wrong, I will gladly contribute: if you will only sew together all one afternoon, and no one of you speak a word, I will give you a hundred dollars." The society met, and complete silence reigned. The young men of the community hearing of this, and seeing an admirable chance to tease their fair acquaintances, came in large numbers to the sewing-circle, and tried to engage the young women in conversation; at first these attempts were in vain, but, finally, to a question skillful-

ly put, one of the young ladies made a reply. This broke the spell; of course, the whole assembly were very unhappy; but, when all was told to Mr. Cornell, he said, "They shall have their hundred dollars, for they have done better than any other women ever did."

But I ought to say here that this little episode would be grossly misunderstood, were it supposed to indicate any tendency in his heart or mind toward a cynical view of womankind. Nothing could be more simple and noble in its way than his reference to her who had stood at his side courageously, hopefully, and cheerily during his years of struggle and want of appreciation: well might he speak of her, as he did once in my hearing, as "the best woman who ever lived." And his gentle courtliness and thoughtful kindness were deeply appreciated in other households, as well as in his own. His earnestness, too, in behalf of the higher education of women, and of their fair treatment in various professions and occupations, showed something far deeper than conventional politeness.

From the time when I began to know him best, his main thought was concentrated upon the University. His own business interests were freely sacrificed; his time, wealth, and effort were all yielded to his work in taking up the University lands, to say nothing of supplementary work which became in many ways a heavy burden to him.

During the summer preceding the opening of the University, this labor and care began to wear upon him, and he was attacked by an old malady which gave him great pain; yet his stoicism asserted itself: through night after night, as I lay in the room next his at his farm-house, I could hear him groan, and to my natural sympathy was added a fear lest he might not live through this most critical period in the history of the new institution; but, invariably, when I met him the next morning and asked how he felt, his answer was, "All right," or "Very well"; I cannot remember ever hearing him make any complaint of his sufferings or even any reference to them.

Nor did pain diminish his steady serenity or generosity: I remember that on one hot afternoon of that summer, when he had come into the house thoroughly weary, a young man called upon him to ask for aid in securing school-books. Mr. Cornell questioned him closely, and then rose, walked with him down the hill into the town, and bought the books which were needed.

As the day approached for the formal opening of the University, he was obliged to yield to the malady, and to remain in bed: care and toil had prostrated me also, and both of us, a sorry couple indeed, had to be taken from our beds to be carried to the opening exercises.

A great crowd had assembled from all parts of the State: many were enthusiastic, more doubtful, and some were decidedly inclined to scoff.

Some who were expected were not present. The Governor of the State, though he had been in Ithaca the day before, quietly left town on the eve of the opening exercises. His Excellency was a very wise man in his generation, and evidently felt that it was not best for him to have too much to do with an institution which the sectarian press had so generally condemned. I shall not soon forget the way in which Mr. Cornell broke the news to me, and the accent of calm contempt in his voice. Fortunately there remained with us the Lieutenant Governor, General Stewart Lyndon Woodford: he came to the front nobly, and stood by us firmly and munificently ever afterward.

Mr. Cornell's speech on that occasion was very simple and noble; his whole position, to one who knew what he had gone through in the way of obloquy, hard work, and self-sacrifice, was touching. Worn down by his illness, he was unable to stand, and he therefore read his address in a low tone from his chair. It was very impressive, almost incapacitating me from speaking after him, and I saw tears in the eyes of many in the audience. Nothing could be more simple than this speech of

his : it was mainly devoted to a plain assertion of the true university theory in its most elementary form, and to a plea that women should have equal privileges with men in advanced education. In the midst of it his quaint shrewdness asserted itself ; for, in replying to a recent charge that everything at the University was unfinished, he remarked, in substance, "We have not invited you to see a University finished, but to see it begun."

As to the effect of his speech, I may mention that, at the close of it, Mr. Henry W. Sage came to me and said, "I notice that Mr. Cornell and you advocate the admission of women to the University : when the time comes for it, let me know,—I will stand by you." The result is to-day seen in Sage College with its equipment and endowment, the Library, the Professorship of Ethics, and a great number of other gifts, amounting to at least a million of dollars.

The opening day seemed a success, but the very success of it stirred up the enemy : a bitter letter from Ithaca to a leading denominational organ in New York gave the signal, and soon the whole sectarian press was in full cry, steadily pressing upon Mr. Cornell and those who stood near him. The secular presses also soon thought it wise to join in the attack, and it was quickly extended from his ideas to his honor, and even to his honesty. It seemed beyond the conception of many of these gentlemen that a man of Quaker birth, who, if he gave any thought at all to this or that creed, or this or that "plan of salvation," passed it all by as utterly irrelevant and inadequate, could be an honest man ; and a far greater number seemed to find it just as difficult to believe that a man could sacrifice his comfort and risk his fortune in managing so great a landed property for the public interest without any concealed scheme of plunder.

But he bore all this with his usual stoicism. It seemed to increase his devotion to the institution, rather than to diminish it. When the receipts from the endowment fell short or were

delayed, he continued to advance money freely to meet the salaries of the professors; and, for apparatus, books, and equipment of every sort, his purse was constantly opened.

Yet, in those days of toil and care and obloquy, there were some things which encouraged him much. At that period all patriotic Americans felt deep gratitude to Goldwin Smith for his courage and eloquence in standing by our country during the Civil War, and great admiration for his profound and brilliant historical lectures at Oxford. Naturally, on arriving in London, I sought to engage him for the new University, and was authorized by Mr. Cornell to make him large pecuniary offers. Professor Smith entered at once into our plans heartily, wrote to encourage us, came to us, lived with us amid what, to him, must have been great privations, lectured for us year after year as brilliantly as he had ever lectured at Oxford, gave his library to the University with a large sum for its increase, lent his aid very quietly, but none the less effectually, to needy and meritorious students, and steadily refused then, as he has ever since done, and now does, to accept a dollar of compensation. Nothing ever gave Mr. Cornell more encouragement than this: for "Goldwin," as he called him, in his Quaker way, there was always a very warm corner in his heart. It is pleasing to note, as I write these lines, that the very newspapers which howled after Mr. Cornell during all this period as a "jobber," " a land-grabber," and "a land-thief," are now denouncing Cornell University for spending its money in paying a salary to Goldwin Smith, declaring that such a misuse of funds should stop, and that he should be discharged.

Mr. Cornell also found much pleasure in many of the lecture courses established at the opening of the University. For Professor Agassiz he formed a warm friendship, and their discussions regarding geological questions were very interesting, eliciting from Agassiz a striking tribute to Mr. Cornell's closeness of observation and sagacity in reasoning. The lectures on history by Goldwin Smith and on literature by James Rus-

sell Lowell, George William Curtis, and Bayard Taylor he also enjoyed greatly.

The scientific collections and apparatus of various sorts gave him constant pleasure. I had sent from England, France, and Germany a large number of charts, models, and pieces of philosophical apparatus, and, regarding some of them, had thought it best to make careful explanations to him, in order to justify so large an expenditure ; but I soon found this unnecessary. His shrewd mind enabled him to understand any piece of apparatus quickly, and to appreciate it fully. I have never had to deal with any man whose instinct in such matters was more true. If a book or scientific specimen or piece of apparatus was necessary to the proper work of a department, he could easily be made to see it ; and then it *must* come to us, no matter at what cost. Like the great prince of navigators in the fifteenth century, he might be described as a man "who had the taste for great things"—"*qui tenia gusto en cosas grandes.*" He felt that the University was to be great, and he took his measures accordingly. He was generally, among his colleagues, thought very sanguine ; but, when he declared that the University should yet have an endowment of three millions, he was regarded by most of them as a mere dreamer.

I feel bound to say that I have never known a man more entirely unselfish. I have seen him, when his wealth was counted in millions, devote it so generously to university objects that he felt it necessary to stint himself in some matters of personal comfort. When urged to sell a portion of the University land at a sacrifice, in order to better our foundations, he answered in substance, "Don't let us do that yet : I will wear my old hat and coat a little longer, and let you have a little more money from my own pocket."

This feeling seemed never diminished, even under the worst opposition. He "kept the faith," no matter who opposed him.

One gentleman, eminent and justly respected for great

abilities shown in his professorship at one of the oldest of the eastern Universities, published a treatise, which was widely circulated, to prove that the main ideas on which the University is based were utterly impracticable, and especially that the presentation of various courses of instruction suited to young men of various aims and tastes, with liberty of choice between these, was preposterous. It is interesting to note that this same eminent gentleman was afterward led to adopt this same "impracticable" policy at his own University. Others of almost equal eminence insisted that to give advanced scientific and technical instruction in the same institution with classical instruction, was folly; and these gentlemen were probably not converted until the plan was adopted at English Cambridge. Others still insisted that an institution not belonging to any one religious sect, must be "godless," would not be patronized, and could not succeed. Their eyes were opened later by the sight of men and women of the different Christian denominations pressing forward at Cornell University to contribute sums, which, in the aggregate, amounted to nearly as much as the original endowment.

He earned the blessing of those who, not having seen, have yet believed: though he did not live long enough to see the fundamental principles of the University thus force their way to recognition and adoption by those who had most strongly opposed them, his faith remained undiminished to the end of his life.

But the opposition to his work developed into worse shapes; many leading journals in the State, when not openly hostile to him, were cold and indifferent, and some of them were steadily abusive. This led to a rather wide-spread feeling that "where there is smoke, there must be fire," and we who knew the purity of his purpose, his unselfishness, his sturdy honesty, labored long in vain against this feeling.

I regret to say that some eminent men connected with important Universities in the country, showed far too much read-

iness to acquiesce in this unfavorable view of our Founder. From hardly one of our sister institutions came any word of cheer, and from some of them came most bitter attacks, not only upon the system adopted in the new University, but upon Mr. Cornell himself. But his friends were more afflicted, by far, than he: all this opposition only served to strengthen his faith. As to this effect upon him, I recall one or two quaint examples. At the darkest period in the history of the University, I mentioned to him that a remarkably fine collection of mathematical books was offered us for five thousand dollars. Under ordinary circumstances he would have bought it for us at once; but this, at that moment, when he was almost crushed under burdens already assumed, would not have been advised by any of his friends, and he quietly said, "Somewhere there is a man walking about who wants to give us this five thousand dollars." I am glad to say that his faith was soon justified; such a man appeared,—a man who was glad to give the required sum as a testimony to his belief in Mr. Cornell's integrity.

Another little example may be given as typical: near the close of a birthday party given at one of the college buildings, a pleasant social dance sprang up among the younger people—students from the University and young ladies from the village. This brought a very severe protest from sundry clergymen of the place, declaring dancing to be "destructive of vital godliness." No answer was ever made to this protest; but it was noticed that, at every social gathering on "Founder's Day" afterward, as long as Mr. Cornell lived, he had arrangements made for dancing. I never knew a man more easily led by right reason, but I never knew one more unmoved by cant or dogmatism.

To most attacks upon him in the newspapers, he neither made nor suggested any reply; but one or two which were especially virulent he answered simply and conclusively. This had no effect, of course, in stopping the attacks, but it had one

effect, at which the friends of the University rejoiced: it bound his old associates to him all the more closely, and led them to support him all the more vigorously. When a paper in one of the largest cities in western New York had been especially abusive, one of Mr. Cornell's old friends living in that city wrote, "I know that the charges recently published are utterly untrue, but I am not skilled in newspaper controversy, so I will simply add to what I have already given to the University a special gift of thirty thousand dollars, which will testify to my townsmen here, and, perhaps to the public at large, my confidence in Mr. Cornell."

Such was the way of Hiram Sibley. Upon another attack, especially violent, from the organ of one of the denominational colleges, another old friend of Mr. Cornell in the eastern part of the State, a prominent member of the religious body which this paper represented, sent his check for several thousand dollars, to be used for the purchase of books for the Library, and to show confidence in Mr. Cornell by deeds as well as words.

Vile as these attacks were, worse remained behind. A local politician, who had been sent to the Legislature from the district where the "People's College" had lived its short life, prepared, with pettifogging ability, a long speech, to show that the foundation of Cornell University, Mr. Cornell's endowment of it, and his contract to locate the lands for it, were parts of a great cheat and swindle. This thesis, developed in all the moods and tenses of abuse before the Legislature, was next day published at length in the leading journals of the metropolis, and echoed throughout the Union. The time for these attacks was skillfully chosen: the Crédit Mobilier and other schemes had been revealed at Washington, and everybody was only too ready to believe any charge against anybody. That Mr. Cornell had been known for forty years as an honest man seemed to go for nothing.

The enemies of the University, especially those acting in

the supposed interest of the various denominational colleges, were prompt to support the charges, and they found some echoes even among those who were benefited by his generosity,—even among the students themselves. At this I felt it my duty to call the whole body of students together, and in a careful speech to explain Mr. Cornell's transactions, answering the charges fully. This speech, though spread through the State, could evidently do but little in righting the wrong; but it brought to me what I shall always feel a great honor—a share in the abuse showered mainly on him.

Very characteristic was Mr. Cornell's conduct under this outrage. That same faith in justice, that same patience under wrong, which he always showed, was more evident than ever.

On the morning after the attack in the Legislature had been blazoned in all the leading newspapers—in the early hours, and after a sleepless night—I heard the rattle of gravel against my window panes. On rising I found Mr. Cornell standing below: he was serene and cheerful, and had evidently taken the long walk up the hill to quiet my irritation. His first words were a jocose prelude: the bells of the University, which were then chimed at six o'clock, were ringing merrily, and he called out, "Come down here and listen to the chimes; I have found a spot where you can hear them directly with one ear, and their echo with the other."

When I had come down, we first investigated the echo of the chime, which had really aroused his interest; then he said seriously, "Don't make yourself unhappy over this matter—it will turn out to be a good thing for the University; I have long foreseen that this attack must come, but have feared that it would come after my death, when the facts would be forgotten, and the transactions little understood: I am glad that the charges are made now, while I am here to answer them." We then discussed the matter, and it was agreed that he should telegraph and write Governor Dix, asking him to appoint an investigating committee, of which the majority should be from

the political party opposed to his own. This was done: the committee was composed of Horatio Seymour, formerly Governor of the State and Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States, William A. Wheeler, Vice-President of the United States, and John D. Van Buren, all three men of the highest standing, and two of them politically opposed to Mr. Cornell.

During the long investigation which ensued at New York and in Ithaca, he never lost his patience, though at times sorely tried. Various schemers who had been disappointed in bending him to their purposes, among these one person who had not been allowed to make an undue profit out of the University lands, and another who had been allowed to depart from a professorship on account of hopeless incompetency, were the main witnesses. The onslaught was led by the person who made the attack in the Legislature, and he had raked together a mass of half-truths and surmises; but the evidence on Mr Cornell's side consisted of a complete exhibition of all the facts and documents. The unanimous report of the committee was all that his warmest friends could desire, and its recommendations regarding the management of the fund were such as Mr. Cornell had long wished, but which he had hardly dared ask. The result was a complete triumph for him.

Yet the attacks continued: the same paper which had been so prominent in sounding them through the western part of the State continued them as before, and, almost to the very day of his death, assailed him periodically as a "land jobber," "land grabber," and "land thief." But he took these foul attacks by tricky declaimers and his vindication by three of the most eminent fellow-citizens with the same serenity. That there was in him a profound contempt for the wretched creatures who assailed him and imputed to him motives as vile as their own, can hardly be doubted; yet, though I was with him constantly during this period, I never heard him speak harshly of them; nor could I ever see that this injustice diminished

his good will toward his fellow-men and his desire to benefit them.

At the very time when these attacks were at their worst, he was giving especial thought to the problem of bringing education at the University within reach of young men of good ability and small means. I am quite within bounds in saying that he gave an hour to thought upon this for every minute he gave to thought upon the attacks of his enemies.

It was during this period that he began building his beautiful house near the University; and in this he showed some of his peculiarities. He took much pains to secure a tasteful plan, and some of the ideas embodied in it evidently resulted from his study of beautiful country-houses in England. Characteristic of him also was his way of carrying on the work. Having visited several quarries in various parts of the State, in order to choose the best possible building-stone, he employed some German stone-carvers who had recently left work upon the Cathedral of Cologne, brought them to Ithaca, and allowed them to work on with no interference save from the architect: if they gave a month or more to the carving of a single capital or corbel, he made no remonstrance. When he had thus secured the best stone-work, he selected the best seasoned oak and walnut and called skillful carpenters from England.

In thus going abroad for artisans there was no want of fidelity to his own countrymen, nor was there any alloy of personal vanity in his motives. His purpose evidently was to erect a house which should be as perfect a specimen of the builder's art as he could make it, and therefore useful, as an example of thoroughly good work, to the local workmen.

In connection with this, another incident throws light upon his characteristics. Above the front entrance of the house was a scroll or ribbon in stone, evidently intended for a name or motto. The words carved there were, "True and Firm." It is a curious evidence of the petty criticism which beset him

in those days, that this motto was at times cited as a proof of his vain-glory. It gives me pleasure to relieve any mind sensitive on this point, and to vindicate the truth of history by saying that I, myself, placed the motto there. Calling his attention one day to the scroll and the need of an inscription, I suggested a translation of the old German motto, "*Treu und Fest*"; and, as he made no objection, I wrote it out for the stone-cutters, but told Mr. Cornell that there were people, perhaps, who might translate the second word "obstinate."

The point of this lay in the fact which Mr. Cornell knew very well, that he was frequently charged with obstinacy. Yet an obstinate man, in the evil sense of that word, he was not. For several years it fell to my lot to discuss a multitude of questions with him, and reasonableness was one of his most striking characteristics: he was one of those very rare strong men who recognize adequately their own limitations. True, when he had finally made up his mind in a matter fully within his own province, he remained firm; but I have known very few men wealthy, strong, successful, as he was, so free from the fault of thinking that, because they are good judges of one class of questions, they are equally good in all others. One mark of an obstinate man is the announcement of opinions upon subjects regarding which his experience and previous training give him little or no means of judging. This was not at all the case with Mr. Cornell. When questions arose regarding internal university management, or courses of study, or the choice of professors, or plans for their accommodation, he was never quick in announcing or tenacious in holding an opinion. There was no purse pride about him. He evidently did not believe that his success in building up a fortune had made him an expert or judge in questions to which he had never paid special attention.

During the last year or two of his life, I saw not so much of him as during several previous years. He had become greatly interested in various railway projects, having as their

purpose the connection of Ithaca, as a University town, with the State at large; and he threw himself into these plans with great energy. His course in this was prompted by a public spirit as large and pure as that which had led him to found the University. When, at the suggestion of sundry friends, I ventured to remonstrate with him very gently against going so largely into these railway enterprises at his time of life, he said, "I shall live twenty years longer, and make a million of dollars more for the University endowment." Alas! within six months from that day he lay dead in the midst of many broken hopes. His plans, which, under other circumstances, would have been judged wise, seemed wrecked by the financial crisis which had just come upon the country: fortunately the final result was not so injurious as was at one time feared.

In his last hours I visited him frequently. His mind remained clear, and he showed his old freedom from any fault-finding spirit, though evidently oppressed by business cares and bodily suffering. His serenity was especially evident as I sat with him the night before his death, and I can never forget the placidity of his countenance, both then and on the next morning, when all was ended.

Something more should be said here, perhaps, regarding Mr. Cornell's political ideas. In the Legislature he was a firm Republican, but as free as possible from anything like partisan bigotry. Party ties in local matters sat lightly upon him. He spoke in public very little, and took far greater interest in public improvement than in party advantage. With many of his political opponents his relations were most friendly. For such Democrats as Hiram Sibley, the late Erastus Brooks, and William Kelley, he had the deepest respect and admiration. He cared little for popular clamor on any subject, braving it more than once by his votes in the Legislature. He was evidently willing to take any risk involved in waiting for the sober second thought of the people. I again declare him the most unselfish man I have ever known, and he was as free from

ordinary ambition as from selfishness. When there was a call from several parts of the State for his nomination as Governor, he said quietly, "I prefer to do work for which I am better fitted."

There was in his ordinary bearing a certain austerity and in his conversation an abruptness which interfered somewhat with his popularity. A student once said to me, "If Mr Cornell would simply stand upon his pedestal as our "Honored Founder", and let us hurrah for him, that would please us mightily ; but, when he comes into the laboratory and asks us gruffly, "What are you wasting your time at, now?" we don't like him so well." The fact on which this remark was based was that Mr. Cornell liked greatly to walk quietly through the laboratories and drafting-rooms, to note the work. Now and then, when he saw a student doing something which especially interested him, he was evidently anxious, as he was wont to say, "to see what the fellow is made of," and he would frequently put some provoking question, liking nothing better than to receive an equally pithy answer. Of his kind feelings towards students I could say much : he was not inclined to coddle them, but was ever ready to help any deserving young man.

Despite his apparent austerity, he was singularly free from harshness in his judgments, even regarding his assailants. There were times when he would have been justified in outbursts of bitterness against those who attacked him in ways so foul and maligned him in ways so vile ; but I never heard any bitter reply from him. In his politics there was never a drop of bitterness. Only once or twice did I ever hear him allude to any conduct which displeased him, and then his comments were rather playful than otherwise : on one occasion, when he had written to a gentleman of great wealth and deserved repute as a philanthropist, asking him to join in carrying the burden of the land locations, and had received an unfavorable answer, he made a remark which seemed to me rather harsh. To this I replied, "Mr. Cornell, Mr. —— is not at all in fault ;

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he does not understand the question as you do; everybody knows that he is a very liberal man." "O", said Mr. Cornell, "it is easy enough to be liberal; the only hard part is drawing the check."

Of his intellectual characteristics, foresight was the most remarkable. Of all men in the country who had to do with the college land grant of 1862, he alone had foreknowledge of the possibilities involved and courage to make them actual.

Clearness of thought on all matters to which he gave his attention was another striking characteristic; hence, whenever he put anything upon paper, it was lucid and cogent. There seems at times in his writings some of the clear, quaint shrewdness so well known in Abraham Lincoln: very striking examples of this are to be found in his legislative speeches, in his address at the opening of the University, and in his letters.

Among his moral characteristics, his truthfulness, persistence, courage and fortitude were most strongly marked. These qualities made him a man of peace. He regarded life as too short to be wasted in quarrels; his steady rule, throughout his business life, was never to begin a lawsuit or have anything to do with one, if it could be avoided. That hysterical joy in litigation and squabble, which has been the weakness of so many men claiming to be strong, and the especial curse of so many American Churches, Colleges, Universities, and other public organizations, had no place in his strong, tolerant nature. He never sought to punish the sins of any one in the courts or to win the repute of an uncompromising fighter. In this peaceable disposition he was prompted not only by his greatest moral quality—his desire to aid his fellow-men,—but by his greatest intellectual quality—his foresight: for he knew well "the glorious uncertainty of the law." He was a builder, not a gladiator.

There resulted from these qualities an equanimity which I have never seen equalled. When his eldest son had been elected to the highest office in the gift of the State Assembly, and had been placed, evidently, on the way to the Governor's

chair—afterward attained—though it must have gratified such a father, he never made any reference to it in my hearing; and, when the body of his favorite grandson, a most winning and promising boy, killed instantly by a terrible accident, was brought into his presence, though his heart must have bled, his calmness seemed almost superhuman.

His religious ideas were such as many excellent people would hardly approve. He had been born into the Society of Friends, and their quietness, simplicity, freedom from noisy activity, and devotion to the public good, attached him to them. But his was not a bigoted attachment; he went freely to various churches, aiding them without distinction of sect, though finally he settled into a steady attendance at the Unitarian Church in Ithaca, for the pastor of which he conceived a great respect and liking. He was never inclined to say much about religion; but, in our talks, he was wont to quote with approval from Pope's "Universal Prayer"—and especially the lines,

> "Teach me to feel another's woe,
> To hide the fault I see;
> The mercy I to others show,
> That mercy show to me."

On the mere letter of Scripture he dwelt little: and, while he never obtruded opinions that might shock any person, and was as far removed as possible from scoffing or irreverence, he did not hesitate to discriminate between parts of our Sacred Books which he considered as simply legendary and parts which were to him pregnant with Eternal Truth.

His religion seemed to take shape in a deeply reverent feeling toward his Creator, and in a constant desire to improve the condition of his fellow-creatures. He was never surprised or troubled by anything which any other human being believed or did not believe: of intolerance he was utterly incapable. He sought no reputation as a philanthropist, cared little for approval, and nothing for applause; but I can say of him, without reserve, that, during all the years I knew him, "he went about doing good."

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